THE EYE:

BY OBADIAH OPTIC.

——VARIOUS OBJECTS FROM THE SENSE,
VARIOUSLY REPRESENTING. MILTON.

Vol. I.] THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 1808. [No. 15.

Carpe diem. HOR. Seize the opportunity.

IN my last number it was assumed as a truth, that in many instances the expression *I have done no harm*, was pregnant with evil, and that what was called doing no harm, oftimes was doing much mischief: In disapproving of sunday walks, I reasoned only as the moralist, their tendency in a religious point of view I leave to the divine; in this number I shall pursue the same subject, because I consider it in the highest degree important.

Youth is the season when right sentiments can be easily inculcated, lasting impressions made, useful habits begun, and when example has the most powerful influence. The wisdom of DEITY in this, as in all his other works, shines conspicuously, that, in early age the attention of the parent is so powerfully and instinctively drawn towards his child, then his greatest delight is to give instruction; nor is this instinctive joy confined to man alone; see the bird on yonder branch, with what assiduous care it warbles each pleasing note for the instruction of its offspring; mark how the just-fledged young are taught to use their yet weak wings, to hop from spray to spray, until grown bold by practice, they wing their way over woods and lawns, and sing their parents' notes: Of this let parents be mindful; if our children are taught in their youth to reverence the sabbath, and pay a just attention to the duties of religion, there is the greatest probability the habit will continue with them through life.

But if otherwise, they be brought up despisers of religion, ten thousand chances to one but they will also be mockers of morality and rebels against the laws of civil society.

It is a trite remark, but absolutely true, that very few men have ever died an ignominious death, but the first part of their confession has been that they were sabbath breakers! Parents, beware, if your children transgress, I beseech you do not sanction their transgression by your example and influence; do not give them this excuse to quiet their own consciences, "father says it is no harm." Ministers from the pulpit may insist on this duty, and the school master threaten with punishment, but "*father says it is no harm*," answers all the objections of the last, and completely puts to silence all the arguments of the former.

I desire also to call public attention to another prevalent practice on the sabbath, during the summer months, I mean bathing: If parents say it is for their health, I would request them to ask their own consciences, whether in the act, they can ask GOD to bless the means; if not, they are criminal, and if they bathe for amusement, they are doubly so. It is a solemn truth, which I have for my own satisfaction established by twenty years observation, that in the city of Philadelphia, there are more persons drowned on the sabbath in June, July and August, than on the other six days of the week! It seems as if GOD, willing to declare that he has sanctified the sabbath, in infinite wisdom punishes some for the breach of his solemn injunction, that so when his judgments are seen, the residue might learn *wisdom*. How awfully was this exemplified last summer, when the father on the sabbath morning led out his two blooming boys to bathe in Schuylkill—but alas! they bloomed no more—the deceitful wave swallowed them, they sank in the deep waters. Parents, paint if you can, the feelings which were then aroused. In the breach of a known duty, to which he had led his children, they were snatched from life. O, how often must this consideration present itself to the mind of the agonized parent, and what compunction must he forever feel. It has always been my opinion, that, revelation apart, the institution of the sabbath was the effect of infinite goodness operating for the good of man: The poor find a relaxation from their labours, the slave in many countries, even where that horrid system is still allowed, is permitted to enjoy a holyday, beasts are suffered generally to rest—and religion exerts her influence on this day to shut out the world, point to futurity, inculcate the necessity of doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly; refreshed by the duties of the day and the joyous hope it inspires

that in a future world all tears, pains and sighing shall cease, the poor man rises with renewed vigour, his sentiments are elevated, his nervous arm is new strung with strength, he engages in the daily task, he proceeds with a contented heart, he eats his bread in gladnesss and the water of the brook is pleasing to his taste. Parents, I shall conclude this essay with an extract from a very old, and in my opinion, a very good book, and I trust you will read it with attention.

"Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy GOD; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: Wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it."

OBADIAH OPTIC.

ORIGINAL.

THE TORTOISE.—No. IX.

Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest'd. POPE.

THE prospect of rest to the weary traveller, is an object which cheers him in his way, exhilarates his spirits, and gives fresh vigour to his exertions. In the journey of human life, we are ever looking forward to that period when we shall sit down to enjoy the fruit of our toils, in tranquility and ease, when our plans shall be matured and our schemes accomplished: In the early part of this pilgrimage, the most interesting of our concerns is that of a settlement in life agreeable to our wishes; many plans are conceived, for then is the mind fruitful in resources, and happy is he whose reason is so far the superiour of his passions, as to point out the most suitable line of conduct for him to pursue; such will, if persevered in, unbiassed by the various opinions of others, undoubtedly eventuate to his advantage.

The choice of a companion—a female friend—a dear participator of our fortune, our griefs and our joys, is one, and if not the greatest, far from being the least important subject of our consideration. Youthful connexions, at first of a friendly nature, are sometimes formed, which "grow with our growth

and strengthen with our strength," until friendship expands in mutual love; in such case many anxieties are avoided, the parties have no choice, and marriage seems a matter of course: But I deem not those less happy, who are, in this respect, differently circumstanced, if the selection be made, not according to the prostituted acceptation of the term *prudence* as it respects this transaction, but rather from a congeniality of virtues connected with sentiments of pure affection, each possessing these qualities, the union must be unquestionably a prudential one.

Having thus far advanced, we feel a serenity of mind which sweetens every enjoyment, especially if susceptible of gratitude to the great PARENT of the universe, from whom all our blessings flow; and, as when travelling, the distance seems less if we are accompanied by those whose conversation is agreeable, so now our years pass rapidly away, and ere we are aware, age supplants youth, and admonishes us to look beyond this transitory existence for permanent happiness. We now survey the past—contemplate the dangers escaped, and the many vicissitudes connected with our progress; and if the clouds of guilt darken not the retrospect, a pleasing satisfaction will beam upon the soul; and though all our designs may not have been carried into effect, yet it must be acknowledged that a greater share of happiness is possessed than could be reasonably expected, and this we shall not fail to do if candour accompanies our observations.

Every period of life has its joys and sorrows, and may with propriety be stiled, a scene of tears and smiles;—the innumerous pleasures of youth are often embittered by concommitant disappointments; manhood opens to our view cheering prospects, attended with cares and perplexities, reason expands but still doubts arise, and our enjoyments are then often rendered less pleasing by the anxiety we feel lest they should suddenly take flight: At length age, though frequently attended with bodily infirmity, brings experience and sober consideration, we now view things as they are, undisguised by the colours of fancy; and, if virtue has been our directing star through the devious path, contentment plays round the heart, a calm joy brightens the countenance, and we participate in the bosom of domestic felicity, the most precious of all sublunary blessings—anticipation of future joys.

TIM TITULAR.

ORIGINAL.

A TALE WITHOUT A NAME.

(continued from page 166.)

OVERWHELMED with the various emotions, which so complete and shameful a defeat occasioned, CALVERT and his infamous companion retired, and left HENRY with the almost expiring MARIA; overcome with anguish, she only begged to be conducted home: And will you, said she, my best friend, will you make me a solemn promise? nay, will you swear, that the knowledge of my misfortune shall be forever concealed within your own breast? To this, he readily agreed, (nor was the request necessary, he would have done so from tenderness to MARIA) and conducted her to her home.

It remains for us to relate in what manner HENRY became possessed of the note, which happily led to the discovery of CALVRET'S villainy: The latter had visited him one evening at his lodgings, and was prevented from returning home by one of those violent thunder storms which sometimes happen in the summer season, he therefore shared HENRY'S bed; the next day the chamber maid brought HENRY the foregoing note, which had dropped from CALVERT'S pocket; it was open and HENRY read it to ascertain whether its contents were of any importance; the information it gave him was of a singular nature, and he resolved to use his utmost exertions to defeat his design, if it should appear that one of so infamous a nature had been formed; the reader is already acquainted with the consequence; nor was it through fear of CALVERT and his companion, that he was armed, but determined to accomplish his purpose, he wished to obviate the necessity of any contest.

While breakfasting the next morning, HENRY was presented with the following note:—

SIR,

You have injured me in a manner the most cruel and irreparable, you have treacherously deceived and blasted the happiness of your friend; if you have a spark of honour remaining, you will meet me, at any hour you may appoint, on the Jersey shore, with your friend and weapons, CALVERT.

To which he, without hesitating, returned the following answer,

SIR,

THE charges you make against me, I return, they belong to you; if I have blasted your happiness, it is your own fault; you would have blasted that of another: I *have* a spark of honour remaining, which I will take care shall not be extinguished by the pistol of a duelist; but remember, any *personal* attack will be repelled by your deceived friend, HENRY.

His answer, the reader will perceive, was not dictated by custom, but by his education, and by those pure principles which had been infused into his mind; yet he was not altogether insensible to the severity of the task he had to accomplish; he knew he must encounter the taunts of the ill judging and inconsiderate, and that he must endure all the shame, which a slavish submission to an absurd and destructive custom would induce others to bestow on him; he also knew that he would receive the approbation of the wise and good, but he forgot that their good opinions would not be made public, but confined to a small circle, while the contempt of the bad would meet him in every path and embitter his happiest moments; he however felt that he had discharged his duty; courage he did not want, but did not wish to prove it by fighting a duel. Time brought experience; he soon found himself shuned by some, and laughed at by others; when he entered into company, he could hear the buz of ridicule circulating the room at his expense; those of CALVERT's friends who knew him, every where treated him with contempt and derision; but he bore all with a calmness and dignity which astonished them: For reasons already mentioned, he kept the cause of the challenge secret; CALVERT he knew would certainly not divulge it; this gave the latter an advantage of which he did not fail to profit, and he represented the circumstances in such a manner as to cast all the odium upon HENRY, with his incompatible integrity and unsullied honour he was well acquainted, and in them reposed full confidence: But even forbearance may be roused into action by a repetition of injuries: HENRY was one evening at Mr. *****'s ball room; CALVERT was likewise present, it was their first meeting since the late occurence; CALVERT loaded him with every opprobrious and disgraceful epithet which our language affords, and at last struck him; and here, we mention it with regret, HENRY forgot every thing he owed to himself, every lesson of patience and fortitude which he had so long and so nobly exercised! rage and fury distorted his features, he seized him, and exerting his utmost strength,

dashed him against the wall, and he lay, to all appearance dead. The passions which agitated the breast of HENRY subsided or rather changed to remorse and horrour—he rushed from the room; some attempted to stop him, but he overturned all who opposed his escape, and favoured by the darkness, fled to the country; involuntarily he took the road which led across the Schuylkill, and buried himself in the woods; here deeming himself secure from immediate discovery, he sat down to rest his wearied limbs and agitated frame, here he bitterly lamented his want of forbearance, and his loss of that peace which had once inhabited his bosom; he had robbed a fellow creature of life—sent him in an unprepared state to his great account; he was a murderer, and as such, amenable to his country; he had at once transgressed the laws of heaven and earth; he thought himself a stain to humanity, and a blot on the fair face of creation. These reflections tormented him almost to madness; the remembrance of all his former happiness obtruded itself to add poignancy to his wretchedness: CONSTANTIA his sister, his beloved CONSTANTIA, was no longer any thing to him; his hands were stained with human blood, and she would recoil from him with horror and detestation; the brightness with which fancy had clothed his prospects of futurity, was vanished forever, and clouds, darkness and despair were all on which his eyes were ever again to open.

His journey had been resumed while these thoughts were passing in his mind; his head burned, his eyes seemed ready to burst from their sockets; still clinging to life, he sought a retired spot on the river's bank, where he might, if possible, repose ere he again pursued his journey he knew not whither; his thoughts still dwelt on the same objects, but the brighter side of the picture presented itself: It was true he had deprived a fellow creature of life, but it was not wantonly; he had suffered every insult, stigma and reproach to be heaped upon him, till nature rebelled against reason and punished, *dreadfully indeed*, the primary cause of them; for this he believed his life was forfeited; but was that law just which inflicted the punishment of death on a man who had vindicated his own cause, only when driven to the last extremity? Such were his reflections, but his mind was a chaos where nothing had its proper place, from whence peace, order, and harmony had fled and left the faculties almost without a director.

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Here, there is a chasm in the manuscript, and we are only told in a few words, that he was afterwards found by a hunter, far remote from any habitation, his dress nearly torn to pieces, his features disfigured, his frame emaciated and bruised, extended on the ground on the verge of dissolution.

(to be concluded)

SELECTED.

CRITICAL HISTORY OF POVERTY.

IT is difficult precisely to fix on the epoch of Poverty, or to mark with accuracy the moment of its birth. Chronogists are silent; and those who have formed genealogies of the gods, have not noticed this deity's, though she has been admitted as such in the pagan heaven, and has had temples and altars on earth. The fabulists have pleasingly narrated of her, that at the feast which Jupiter gave on the birth of Venus, she modestly stood at the gate of the palace, to gather the remains of the celestial banquet; when she observed Plutus, the god of riches, inebriated, not with wine, but with nectar, roll out of the heavenly residence; and, passing into the Olympian gardens, he threw himself on a vernal bank. She seized the opportunity to become familiar with the god. The frolicsome deity honoured her with his caresses; and, from this amour sprung the god of love, who resembles his father in jollity and mirth, and his mother in his nudity. This fabulous narration is taken from the divine Plato. Let us now turn to her historic extraction.

Poverty, though of remote antiquity, did not exist from the earliest times. In the first age, distinguished by the epithet of the golden, she certainly was unknown. In the terrestrial Paradise she never entered. This age, however, had but the duration of a flower: when it finished, Poverty began to appear. The ancestors of the human race, if they did not meet her face to face, knew her in a partial degree. She must have made a rapid progress at the time of Cain; for Josephus informs us, he scoured the country with a banditti. Proceeding from this obscure period, it is certain she was firmly established in the patriarchal age. It is then we hear of merchants, who publicly practised the commerce of vending slaves, which indicates the utmost degree of Poverty. She is distinctly marked by Job; this holy man protests, that he had nothing to re-

proach himself with respecting the poor, for he had assisted them in their necessities.

As we advance in the scriptures, we observe the legislators paid great attentions to their relief. Moses, by his wise precautions, endeavoured to soften the rigours of this unhappy state. The division of lands by tribes and families; the septennial jubilees; the regulation to bestow, at the harvest-time, a certain portion of all the fruits of the earth for those families who were in want; and the obligation of his moral law, to love one's neighbour as one's self, were so many mounds erected against the inundations of Poverty. It was thus that the Jews, under their aristocratic government, had few or no mendicants.—Their kings were unjust; and rapaciously seizing on inheritances which were not their right, increased the numbers of the poor. From the reign of David, there were oppressive governours, who devoured the people as their bread. It was still worse under the foreign powers of Babylon, of Persia, and the Roman emperours. Such were the extortions of their publicans, and the avarice of their governours, that the number of mendicants was dreadfully augmented; and, it was probably for that reason that the opulent families consecrated a tenth part of their property for their succours, as appears in the time of the evangelists. In the preceding ages, no more was given—as their casuists assure us—than the fortieth, or thirtieth part; a custom which this unfortunate nation to the present hour preserve and look on it as an indispensible duty; so much so, that if there are no poor of their nation where they reside, they send it to the most distant parts. The Jewish merchants always make this charity a regular charge in their transactions with each other; and, at the close of the year, render an account to the poor of their nation.

By the example of Moses, the ancient legislators were taught to pay a similar attention to their poor. Like him, they published laws respecting the division of lands; and many ordinances were made for the benefit of those whom fires, inundations, wars, or bad harvests, had reduced to want. Convinced that *idleness* more inevitably introduced Poverty than any other cause, they punished it rigorously. The Egyptians made it criminal; and no vagabonds or mendicants were suffered, under any pretence whatever. Those who were convicted of slothfulness, and still refused to labour for the public when labour was offered to them, were punished with death. It was the Egyptian task-masters who observed that the Israel-

ites were an idle people, and obliged them to furnish bricks for the erection of those famous pyramids, which are the works of men who otherwise had been vagabonds and mendicants.

The same spirit inspired Greece. Lycurgus would not have in his republic either *poor* or *rich*; they lived and laboured in common. As in the present times, every family has its stores and cellars; so they had public ones, and distributed the provisions according to the ages and constitutions of the people. If the same regulation was not precisely observed by the Athenians, the Corinthians, and the other people of Greece, the same maxim existed in full force against idleness.

According to the laws of Draco, Solon, &c. a conviction of wilful poverty was punished with the loss of life. Plato, more gentle in his manners, would have them only banished. He calls them enemies of the state; and pronounces, as a maxim, that where there are great numbers of mendicants, fatal revolutions will happen; for, as these people have nothing to lose, they seize opportunities to disturb the public repose.

The ancient Romans, whose universal object was the public prosperity, were not indebted to Greece on this head. One of the principal occupations of their censors, was to keep a watch on the vagabonds. Those who were condemned as incorrigible sluggards, were sent to the mines, or made to labour on the public edifices. The Romans of those times, unlike the present race, did not consider the *far nineto* as a pleasing occupation; they were convinced, that their liberalities were ill placed in bestowing them on such men. The little republics of the *bees* and the *ants* were often held out as examples; and the last, particularly, where Virgil says, that they have elected overseers, who correct the sluggards—

—— Pars agmina cogunt
Castigantque moras.* VIRGIL.

And, if we may trust the narratives of our travellers, the *beavers* pursue this regulation more rigorously and exact than even these industrious societies. But their rigour, although but animals, is not so barbarous as that of the ancient Germans; who, Tacitus informs us, plunged the idlers and vagabonds in the thickest mire of their marshes, and left them to perish by a kind of death that resembled their inactive dispositions.

* A part urge on the troops—and chide their slow delay.

Yet, after all, it was not inhumanity that prompted the ancients thus severely to chastise idleness: they were induced to it by a strict equity; and it would be doing them injustice to suppose, that it was thus they treated those *unfortunate poor* whose indigence was occasioned by infirmities, by age, or unforeseen calamities. They, perhaps, exceeded us in genuine humanity. Every family constantly assisted its branches, to save from being reduced to beggary; which, to them, appeared worse than death. The magistrates protected those who were destitute of friends, or incapable of labour. When Ulysses was disguised as a mendicant, and presented himself to Eurymachus, this prince, observing him to be robust and healthy, offered to give him employment, or otherwise to leave him to his ill fortune. When the Roman emperours, even in the reigns of Nero and Tiberius, bestowed their largesses, the distributors were ordered to except those from receiving a share, whose bad conduct kept them in misery; for that it was better the lazy should die with hunger than be fed in idleness.

Whether the police of the ancients was more exact, or whether they were more attentive to practise the duties of humanity, or that slavery served as an efficacious corrective of idleness; it clearly appears how little was the misery, and how few the numbers of their poor. This they did, too, without having recourse to hospitals.

At the establishment of Christianity, when the apostles commanded a community of riches among their disciples, the miseries of the poor became alleviated in a great degree. If they did not absolutely live together, as we have seen religious orders, yet the rich continually supplied their distressed brethren: But matters greatly changed under Constantine. This prince, with the best intention, published edicts in favour of those Christians who had been condemned, in the preceding reigns, to slavery, to the mines, the galleys, or prisons. The church felt an inundation of prodigious crowds of these unhappy men, who brought with them urgent wants and corporeal infirmities. The Christian families formed then but a few: they could not satisfy these men. The magistrates protected them: they built spacious hospitals, under different titles, for the sick, the aged, the invalids, the widows, and orphans. The emperour, and the most eminent personages, were seen in these hospitals examining the patients. Sometimes they assisted the helpless, and sometimes dressed the wounded. This did so much honour to the new religion, that Julian the apos-

tute introduced this custom among the pagans. But the best things are seen continually perverted.

These retreats were found not sufficient. Many slaves, proud of the liberty they had just recovered, looked on them as prisons; and under various pretexts, wandered about the country. They displayed, with art, the scars of their former wounds and exposed the imprinted marks of their chains. They found thus a lucrative profession in begging, which had been interdicted by the law. The profession did not finish with them: men of an untoward, turbulent, and licentious disposition, gladly embraced it. It spread so wide, that the succeeding emperours were obliged to institute new laws; and it was permitted to individuals to seize on these mendicants for their slaves and perpetual vassals: a powerful preservative against this disorder, which is still observed in many parts of the world.

China presents us with a noble example. No beggars are seen loitering in that country. All the inhabitants are occupied, even to the blind and lame. Those who are incapable of labour, live at the public expense. What is done *there*, may also be performed *here*. Then, instead of that hideous, importunate, idle, licentious poverty—as pernicious to the police as to morality—we should see the poverty of the earlier ages, humble, modest, frugal, robust, industrious, and laborious. Then, indeed, the fable of Plato might be realized: Poverty may be embraced by the god of riches; and, if she did not produce the voluptuous offspring of love, she would become the fertile mother of *Agriculture*, and the ingenious mother of the fine *Arts*, and of all kinds of *Manufactures*. [*EUROP. PUB.*

HISTORICAL ANECDOTE.

PLATO returning from Sicily, and passing through Olympias, though all the people were at the celebration of their plays, which they were more than ordinarily fond of; yet, as soon as they had notice of his approaching near, they forsook their sports, which, considering their vanity, was a wonder: and all ran to meet him, looking upon him with respect and adoration, as a person more than human, that the gods had sent from heaven as a blessing upon mankind. Now, considering the superstition and vanity of the Greeks in their plays, and the mean extraction of Plato, it was a greater honour than ever they gave to any monarch.